



NEWS RELEASE

For more information contact Betty VanDeventer 402.471.4537 or betty.vandeventer@nebraska.gov
July 18, 2013

FOUR NEBRASKA BUSINESS OWNERS RECEIVE 2013 ENTREPRENEUR OF DISTINCTION AWARDS

Four Nebraska business owners who received assistance from Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation were recognized today for their success.

The following three business owners received the 2013 Entrepreneur of Distinction Award:

- Lee Andersen, owner of Havelock Electric in Lincoln. Since September 2011, Andersen has consistently exceeded his net monthly income goal. With affordable rates and a 'no job is too small' attitude, Andersen plans to expand and hire a part-time employee or an apprentice. Andersen recently completed a year-long program and was initiated as a Shriner at the Sesostris Shrine in May 2013. Andersen was injured and became disabled while serving in the military.
- Kristi Paben, owner of Ciao by Kristi in Beatrice. With assistance from Nebraska VR, Paben turned her love of cooking into a full-time business. Paben's main dishes are available for pickup and delivery. Paben's sales have been consistent, which she attributes in part to a steady growth of Facebook fans. In addition to preparing meals for profit, Kristi donates to Beatrice's Backpack Program for low-income children.
- Michael Saalfeld, owner of Saalfeld Construction & Roofing in Seward. Saalfeld has more than doubled his profits in his second year of business. He expanded his marketing through his website and handed out fliers door to door. Saalfeld volunteers through the Seward Chamber of Commerce and has been a member of the USA Deaf Olympics - Track and Field team for four years. In 2011, he was the team captain.

The 2013 Entrepreneur of Distinction Alumni Award was presented to Jack Mann of Brady Get-N-Go in Brady. Since Mann received the 2010 Entrepreneur of Distinction Award, his business has continued to grow. Mann was chosen for his continued success as well as his contributions to his community. Mann has five full-time employees, including an individual who has a disability. He is active in the community and donates to the scouts, grade school, high school and local sports teams.

"It is an honor to recognize individuals who have overcome personal challenges to build successful Nebraska businesses," Nebraska Education Deputy Commissioner Scott Swisher said. "We also recognize you for your willingness to give back to your community by assisting others." Swisher also recognized Nebraska VR staff members who work to help individuals return to work, build businesses and live independently in their communities.

"These individuals were able to take an idea for a business, and with the appropriate information and support, make their goal of self-employment a reality. Their dedication and persistence is a model for others. The recognition they are receiving today is well deserved," Schultz said.

The Nebraska State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) selected the business owners in recognition of their entrepreneurial spirit and outstanding business success. The Council is comprised of individuals who have an interest in working with VR to ensure that the needs of Nebraskan who experience a disability are met in the most effective and efficient manner possible.

The 2013 Entrepreneur of Distinction Awards highlight the successful partnership between Nebraska VR and the Abilities Fund. Nebraska VR offers individualized programs to help people with disabilities find employment consistent with their interests, priorities, strengths, talents and choices. Nebraska VR is a division of the Nebraska Department of Education.